

STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN MIKE ROGERS Management, Integration, and Oversight Subcommittee

“Mismanagement of the Border Surveillance System and Lessons Learned for the New Border Initiative, Part 3”

February 16, 2006

Today we’re holding our third hearing on the mismanagement of the Integrated Surveillance Intelligence System, referred to as ISIS.

This program includes the cameras and sensors that monitor our Nation’s borders.

Let me begin by welcoming our two distinguished witnesses, and thank them for being here today.

I would like to note for the record that this is the first appearance before Congress by the Director of the Department’s new Secure Border Initiative Office.

In our first hearing on ISIS, the Deputy Inspector General for the General Services Administration testified that ISIS was – quote – “a major project gone awry” and “a waste of taxpayer’s dollars.”

At our second hearing in December, the Department’s Inspector General stated that weak project management, and contract oversight, left large portions of the border without camera coverage.

His audit also found...

- ...that payments were made for goods and services never received;
- ...that installation of cameras took an average of 20 months to complete;
- ...that only 60 percent of the camera sites were completed, for a cost of approximately \$800,000 per completed site; and
- ...that millions of dollars intended for border surveillance remain unspent in General Services Administration accounts.

Just last week, the head of the U.S. Border Patrol agency, Chief David Aguilar, testified before Congressman McCaul’s subcommittee.

At that hearing, Chief Aguilar stated that ISIS had – quote – “major problems.”

In my view, the ISIS program is nothing less than the poster child for government waste and mismanagement.

In today’s hearing, we will examine three areas with officials from the agencies responsible for the ISIS program.

First, what went wrong with the ISIS program, and what steps have been taken to fix those problems?

Second, what disciplinary actions have been taken against those Federal employees who mismanaged the ISIS program?

And, third, what assurances do we have that the mistakes made in the ISIS program will not be repeated in implementation of the Secure Border Initiative?

As Ranking Member Meek and I have indicated in two letters to Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson, we expect those employees responsible for the ISIS problems to receive severe disciplinary action, and not just a slap on the wrist.

We expect nothing less for those who wasted taxpayer dollars and jeopardized our border security.

And with that, I will yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. Meek, for any comments he may have.

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